United Nations S/2015/764

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 October 2015

Original: English

Twenty-second semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004)

I. Background

1. The present report is the twenty-second semi-annual report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). It provides a review and an assessment of the process of the implementation of the resolution since my previous report on the subject, which was issued on 16 April 2015 (S/2015/258). I note the continued lack of progress on key provisions of the resolution and highlight continued concerns about increasing pressure on the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon.

2. The position of President of Lebanon has been vacant for just over 16 months. Since the end of the previous President's mandate, the Parliament has been called into session to elect a president on 28 occasions. Owing to the boycott of the sessions by parliamentarians from the Free Patriotic Movement and Hizbullah, the Parliament has failed to elect a new president because the sessions have lacked a quorum, and the position has consequently remained vacant. The prolonged absence of a president has undermined the strength and effectiveness of the remaining State institutions, including the Cabinet and the Parliament, in responding to the needs of Lebanese citizens. My representatives and I have continued to call for the election of a president without delay, as I did in my remarks at the Ministerial Meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon on 30 September.

3. The war in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to have a significant impact on Lebanon's security and stability. Fighting between Hizbullah and violent extremist groups, including the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), in the Syrian Arab Republic, including in the border area of Qalamoun and, most recently, in the town of Zabadani, presents further risks to the security and stability of Lebanon. The fighting has had a particular impact on the safety of local communities close to the border area, including through an increase in incidents of cross-border incursions, shelling and shooting during the reporting period.

4. The Lebanese Armed Forces have continued to respond to the challenges to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Support for the national armed forces from the international community has been ongoing during the reporting period, contributing to a strengthening of their ability to protect Lebanon from multiple security threats. Nonetheless, reports of the regular arrests of alleged terrorists, extremists or recruiters of terrorists, as well as reports of foiled terrorist

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plots, underline the persistent threat to stability and security that Lebanon continues to face.

5. Syrian refugees fleeing violence in their country continue to rely on protection in a number of countries, including Lebanon. As at 25 August, there were 1,112,064 Syrian refugees and 45,000 Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic registered in Lebanon with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), respectively. Since 5 January, the criteria for entry into Lebanon has been revised to exclude asylum-related reasons, except in exceptional humanitarian cases. In early May, the Government of Lebanon asked the Office to suspend the registration of new refugees.

II. Implementation of resolution 1559 (2004)

6. Since the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004) on 2 September 2004, several of its provisions have been implemented, as I highlighted in my previous reports. The Syrian Arab Republic withdrew its troops and military assets from Lebanon in April 2005. Presidential and parliamentary elections were conducted freely and fairly in 2008 and 2009. Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic established full diplomatic relations in 2009.

7. During the reporting period, the Prime Minister continued to affirm Lebanon's respect for all United Nations resolutions. The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and its corresponding impact on Lebanon, however, continued to limit progress in the implementation of the outstanding provisions of resolution 1559 (2004) and other resolutions pertaining to Lebanon.

8. The delineation of the Syrian-Lebanese border, which was strongly encouraged by the Security Council in its resolution 1680 (2006), remains pending. Moreover, the existence and activities of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias along the border continue to pose a threat to the stability of the country and the region. The national armed forces continue to deploy three regiments on the eastern border, maintaining a clear presence of State authority in that vulnerable area. It remains essential that the State achieve a full monopoly on the possession of weapons and the use of force throughout Lebanon. Continued support from the international community in that regard remains a priority.

9. My representatives and I remained in regular contact with all parties in Lebanon during the reporting period, as well as with relevant regional and international leaders. On 30 September, I convened a meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon, in conjunction with Prime Minister Tammam Salam, in the margins of the seventieth session of the General Assembly. The Group called upon all Lebanese leaders to adhere to the Constitution of Lebanon, the Taif Accords and the National Pact and to put the country's interests ahead of partisan politics.

A. Sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon

10. With the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004), the Security Council aimed at strengthening the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout the country, in line with the Taif Accords of 1989, to which all the political parties in Lebanon had committed themselves. That objective has remained the highest priority of my efforts to facilitate the implementation of all resolutions pertaining to Lebanon.

11. I remain very concerned by the continued failure to elect a new president. Parliament has been called into session on 28 occasions since 24 May 2014, but has failed to convene to elect a new president because of the lack of a quorum, which has been caused by the boycott of the sessions by parliamentarians from the Free Patriotic Movement and Hizbullah. Boycotting sessions of Parliament undermines the credibility of Lebanon's democratic tradition and puts additional pressure on the State institutions that continue to operate. During the 16 months since the previous President left office, Lebanon has faced mounting security, economic and humanitarian challenges. I commend the leadership of Prime Minister Tammam Salam during these difficult times and note that political differences among some of Lebanon's leaders have hampered the ability of the Cabinet to function effectively and respond to the serious national and regional pressures facing the country. Citizens have been protesting since 20 August, demanding the delivery of basic public services and the accountability of the Government. Furthermore, in the absence of a session to elect a new president, Parliament has not been able to legislate even on urgent issues. The Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, convened a meeting of Lebanon's political leaders on 9 September, to address the issue of electing a new president, but the session was suspended without results. I note the extension by the Minister of Defence, Samir Moqbel, on 6 August, of the mandates of the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces; the Chief of Staff of the Lebanese Armed Forces; and the Head of the Higher Defence Council.

12. Representatives of the Future Movement and Hizbullah have continued their dialogue sessions. On 25 August, the seventeenth dialogue session was held and, although no solutions to various political issues have emerged from the talks, the continuation of the dialogue has contributed to a reduction of tensions between various groups in the country.

13. In its resolution 1680 (2006), the Security Council strongly encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to respond positively to the request of the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border. I continue to call upon the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon to achieve the full delineation of their common border. Given the continuing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, however, progress has been even more difficult to achieve and no tangible steps were taken by either side in that regard during the reporting period.

14. The delineation and demarcation of the boundaries of Lebanon remain elements essential to guaranteeing national sovereignty and territorial integrity. They also remain critical to facilitating proper border control. The complex security situation along the Syrian-Lebanese border in the current circumstances, including continual reports of cross-border fighting and movements of arms and people,

further underlines the urgency of demarcating the border. While acknowledging the bilateral nature of border delineation, progress on the matter remains an obligation of the two countries, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1559 (2004).

15. Violations of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity have continued on the eastern borders as a direct result of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the reporting period, there has been an increase in the number of security incidents across the Lebanese-Syrian border and in Lebanese territory close to the border. There were reports of at least 96 cross-border shooting incidents, nine incidents of shelling, three rocket attacks from the Syrian side of the border and eight attempted incursions by militants. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has continued to conduct air raids in Lebanon, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity.

16. Security personnel, including members of the national armed forces and internal security forces, who were kidnapped and taken hostage in August 2014 during an incursion of armed men belonging to the Al-Nusra Front and ISIL, have still not been released. Efforts to secure the release of the remaining hostages continue.

17. The continued occupation by Israel of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line stands in violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). My representatives and I continue to engage closely with both parties, with a view to facilitating the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area, pursuant to resolution 1701 (2006).

18. There was no progress in relation to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area during the reporting period. Neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel has yet responded with regard to the provisional definition of the area contained in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), issued on 30 October 2007 (S/2007/641).

19. Unmanned aerial vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets, of the Israel Defense Forces continued to make almost daily overflights of Lebanon during the reporting period, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). The Government of Lebanon has regularly and repeatedly protested against the violations. I have deplored them and demanded that they cease immediately.

B. Extension of control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory

20. The Government of Lebanon has reiterated to the United Nations its intention to extend State authority over all Lebanese territory, as called for in the Taif Accords and in resolution 1559 (2004). The national armed forces and internal security forces have played a crucial role in implementing that commitment under difficult circumstances, and the ability of the Lebanese State to fully exercise its authority over all its territory continues to be challenged.

21. I remain concerned at the involvement of Lebanese fighters in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, including members of Hizbullah. Hizbullah has continued to publicly acknowledge its participation in the fighting in the Syrian Arab

Republic, contrary to its commitment to the Baabda Declaration and Lebanon's policy of disassociation. Funerals of its members killed in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic have continued to be held in Lebanon. Other Lebanese nationals have participated in the fighting across the border in the Syrian Arab Republic, alongside Syrian opposition forces, the Al-Nusra Front and ISIL. There have been reports of those militants being killed during the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic. The involvement of Hizbullah and other Lebanese elements in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic seriously jeopardizes the stability and security of Lebanon. Reports of Hizbullah involvement in conflict elsewhere in the region, including allegedly in Iraq and Yemen, is worrisome and could risk further endangering stability and security in Lebanon.

22. Owing to the efforts of the national armed forces and security agencies, and the increased cooperation between them, there has been an overall decrease in the number of terrorist incidents in the country. The national armed forces have deployed border regiments on the northern and eastern borders of the country. The deployment has repelled attempted incursions of armed fighters into Lebanese territory. Those and other incidents have led to the targeting of national armed forces personnel, causing injuries in some instances. On 20 May, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated close to a checkpoint of the national armed forces on the outskirts of Aarsal. In a separate incident targeting the national armed forces in Tripoli, on 27 July, a bomb exploded next to an officer's vehicle, causing material damage.

23. Consistent and regular international support of the national armed forces remains a priority. I encourage bilateral partners and donors to continue their support to areas in which the national armed forces are most critically in need in order to give them the necessary operational advantage to effectively address security threats, including for counter-terrorism and comprehensive deployment along the country's borders. I welcome the continued assistance provided by several Member States aimed at further strengthening the capabilities of the national armed forces.

24. In view of the continuing cross-border incidents and the reports of arms smuggling, there remains an urgent need to improve the management and control of Lebanon's land borders. Tackling that challenge is also necessary in order to prevent armed groups and militias in Lebanon from expanding their arsenals of weapons, given that such expansion outside State control constitutes a threat to national and regional peace.

25. In my most recent report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2015/475), I referred to a letter dated 27 May from the Permanent Representative of Israel addressed to me regarding actions by Hizbullah in southern Lebanon (S/2015/382). I also referred to a letter dated 10 June from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon addressed to me, in which he recalled his country's letters of complaint about Israel's "ongoing violations" of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty (S/2015/428).

C. Disbanding and disarmament of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias

26. In its resolution 1559 (2004), the Security Council called for the disarming and disbanding of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, a key provision of the

resolution that has not yet been implemented. It reflects and reaffirms a decision to which all Lebanese committed themselves in the Taif Accords, which led at the time to Lebanese militias, with the exception of Hizbullah, relinquishing their weapons. Given the current national context and the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, it is critical that the Accords be preserved and implemented by all, in order to avoid the spectre of a renewed confrontation among the Lebanese and to strengthen the institutions of the State.

27. Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias within the country continue to operate outside the control of the Government, in serious violation of resolution 1559 (2004). Whereas several groups across the political spectrum in Lebanon possess weapons outside government control, the armed component of Hizbullah is the most significant and most heavily armed Lebanese militia in the country. On 24 May, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, stated that Hizbullah possessed the highest military capability since the organization's creation. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups poses a serious challenge to the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. In addition, several Palestinian armed groups continue to operate in the country inside and outside the refugee camps.

28. There has been no tangible progress towards the disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, as called for in the Taif Accords and resolution 1559 (2004). Since the adoption of the resolution, no specific steps have been taken to tackle that crucial issue, which lies at the heart of the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. Several Lebanese groups and individuals continue to speak up against the maintenance by Hizbullah of a military arsenal, which they consider to be a destabilizing factor in the country and a factor that undermines democracy. Many Lebanese see the continued existence of such arms as an implicit threat for use within Lebanon for political reasons.

29. I have repeatedly expressed my deep concern to Lebanese leaders about the serious risks that armed groups pose to the stability of the country and the region. I have urged them to tackle the matter without further delay, given that it is their obligation under Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). It is a fundamental anomaly in a democratic State for a political party to maintain its own militia. Nonetheless, Hizbullah has continued to openly claim that its military capacity is separate from that of the Lebanese State and that its arms serve as a deterrent against potential aggression from Israel.

30. The presence of other armed extremist militants in various parts of the country is also deeply worrisome. Coordination between the national armed forces and other State security forces has led to the arrest of a number of suspected terrorists and the discovery and thwarting of several terrorist plots in the country. On 15 August, Ahmad al-Assir, a militant formerly based in Sidon and wanted by the authorities over his involvement in the attacks against the Lebanese army in June 2013, was arrested at Rafiq Hariri International Airport. His trial, along with those of other detainees of the Sidon clashes, is ongoing.

31. It is in the national interest of Lebanon to ensure that those behind the perpetration of terrorist acts, including political assassinations, are held accountable and that violence is not committed with impunity. I note the 13 May decision of a Lebanese military court sentencing former Minister, Michel Samaha, to imprisonment for his part in a plot to foment sectarian violence in Lebanon. I also

note the continued work of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which sends a clear message that impunity will not be tolerated.

32. The issue of the disarmament of armed groups has been discussed previously in the context of the national dialogue. There have been no sessions of the national dialogue during the reporting period and no other formal discussion among Lebanese parties of the disarmament of armed groups. The issue has not been included in the dialogue between members of the Future Movement and Hizbullah, nor in the dialogue session convened by the Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri.

33. The security situation in the Palestinian refugee camps was relatively calm, with the exception of Ein el-Hillweh camp, where two people were killed on 18 June when fighting broke out between two groups. On 23 July, a Palestinian was shot and killed in the camp, followed three days later by the assassination of a prominent member of the Palestinian joint security force in the camp, Talal al Ordoni. From 22 to 27 August, intermittent but heavy clashes between various factions broke out in Ein el-Hillweh camp, leading to at least six deaths and many injuries. Within that context, I note the relative calm in other Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and welcome the continued commitment of Palestinian leaders to disassociate the Palestinian camps in Lebanon from the violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and the region more broadly.

34. The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside the camps continues to challenge the ability of Lebanon to exercise full sovereignty over its territory. I am concerned by reports of an explosion that caused material damage at a base belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, close to the Lebanese-Syrian border, on 29 July. The presence of that base and other such bases in Lebanon undermines Lebanese sovereignty and governmental authority and makes delineation of the border more difficult. It poses a serious challenge to the effective control of the eastern border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Whereas the details of the explosion cannot be verified by the United Nations, the incident serves as a worrisome reminder that, notwithstanding the decision taken in 2006 by the national dialogue and confirmed in subsequent sessions, no progress was made during the reporting period with regard to dismantling the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada in the country. I have reiterated my calls upon the Lebanese authorities for the implementation of earlier decisions of the national dialogue, specifically those relating to the dismantling of the above-mentioned military bases, and upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with those efforts in good faith.

35. Humanitarian conditions for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are increasingly dire, with the influx of 45,000 refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic since the beginning of the crisis placing tremendous additional pressure on the overall situation in the camps and gatherings and on the efforts of UNRWA to assist them. UNRWA has taken measures to reduce the tension between the Palestinian refugees who have been residing in Lebanon and those arriving from the Syrian Arab Republic by, for example, including refugee children in regular classes in UNRWA schools. The United Nations has continued to urge the Lebanese authorities to improve the living conditions of the refugees. Those efforts should be done without prejudice to the eventual resolution of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive peace agreement in the region.

III. Observations

36. I continue to be disappointed at the lack of further tangible progress made towards the implementation of the remaining provisions of resolution 1559 (2004). Lebanon continues to face challenges to its stability and security, both internally and along its borders with the Syrian Arab Republic, including from terrorist and extremist groups and arms smuggling. It is important that progress continues to be made on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) in order to maintain the achievements already made and to prevent a further deterioration in the stability and security of Lebanon. I reiterate my firm conviction that it is in the best interest of Lebanon and the Lebanese to make progress towards the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) for the long-term stability of the country and the region.

37. I am increasingly concerned at the impact of the continued vacuum in the position of President on the effective functioning of State institutions, including the Cabinet. I highly commend the efforts of Prime Minister Tammam Salam in leading Lebanon under such difficult circumstances and promoting effective decision-making in the interest of the country. It is vital that Lebanon's leaders unite, put aside their partisan and political differences in order to effectively tackle the mounting security, economic and humanitarian challenges that the country faces. I note the continuing protests by citizens, making rightful demands for basic public services and the effective functioning of the Government. Lebanon cannot afford to delay the election of a new president any longer. I call upon members of Parliament to perform their duties responsibly, including by attending the sessions of the Parliament called to elect a new president.

38. I have repeatedly cautioned that the widespread proliferation of weapons outside the control of the State, combined with the existence of heavily armed militias, undermines the security of Lebanese citizens. The maintenance by Hizbullah of sizeable and sophisticated military capabilities outside the control of the Government of Lebanon remains a matter of grave concern, in particular because it creates an atmosphere of intimidation and represents a key challenge to the safety of Lebanese civilians and to the Government monopoly on the legitimate use of force. I reiterate my call upon Hizbullah and all other parties concerned not to engage in any militant activity inside or outside Lebanon, consistent with the requirements of the Taif Accords and resolution 1559 (2004).

39. I condemn the continued violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon, including cross-border incidents in which civilians and members of the national armed forces have been injured on the Lebanese side of the border because of the actions of warring parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The cross-border shelling and rocket attacks by various groups in the Syrian Arab Republic and the air raids by the Syrian air force on Lebanese territory must cease. Those incidents are a clear violation of Lebanese sovereignty. I reiterate my call upon all parties, including the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

40. The participation of Lebanese citizens in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is a breach of the policy of disassociation and the principles of the Baabda Declaration, which was agreed upon by all Lebanese parties in June 2012. The involvement of Hizbullah and other Lebanese elements in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic seriously jeopardizes the security and stability of Lebanon. I am

concerned by reports of the involvement of Hizbullah and other Lebanese elements in fighting elsewhere in the region, including in Iraq and Yemen. Participating in conflict elsewhere risks exposing Lebanon to even greater security threats.

41. I strongly commend the diligent and consistent efforts of the national armed forces in protecting Lebanon's borders, as well as its security and stability. The continued deployment of the national armed forces in the eastern border areas has been essential in repelling repeated attempts by violent, extremist groups, including the Al-Nusra Front and ISIL, to infiltrate Lebanese territory. The impact of the deployment of those border regiments continues to be felt positively throughout the country, especially in the communities located close to the border that are most vulnerable to attacks from extremist groups. It is important to maintain Lebanese political unity in support of the national armed forces as the sole legitimate State institution responsible for defending Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In that context, I note the extension by the Minister of Defence, Samir Moqbel, on 6 August, of the mandates of the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces; the Chief of Staff of the Lebanese Armed Forces; and the Head of the Higher Defence Council. I condemn the continued detention of Lebanese soldiers and security forces personnel held captive by the Al-Nusra Front and ISIL in the eastern Lebanese-Syrian border area. I call upon those holding the remaining security personnel hostage to release them without further delay.

42. I welcome the ongoing cooperation between the various State security agencies and the national armed forces, which has led to further progress in countering terrorism in the country. The collaboration between the various State security services has led to the detainment of an increased number of extremists, who are currently awaiting trial, and a number of terrorist plots have been uncovered and foiled. During the reporting period, the contributions of the internal security forces and the General Directorate of General Security have been significant to preserving Lebanon's security and stability. Broad political support for the various security operations, including subsequent judicial processes, also sends an important message that violence with impunity will not be tolerated.

43. I urge the Government and the national armed forces to take all measures necessary to prohibit Hizbullah and other armed groups from acquiring weapons and building paramilitary capacity outside the authority of the State, in violation of resolution 1559 (2004). The absence of the national dialogue, another casualty of the failure to elect a new president, means that no progress has been made in that regard. I note that decisions taken at earlier sessions of the national dialogue have still not been implemented. I remain convinced that dialogue is the only way forward and note that the discussion paper on a comprehensive national defence strategy, developed in the context of the national dialogue, remains a valuable starting point. I call upon countries in the region that maintain close ties with Hizbullah to encourage the transformation of the armed group into a solely political party and its disarmament, in accordance with the requirements of the Taif Accords and resolution 1559 (2004), which is in the best interests of Lebanon and regional peace and security.

44. I welcome the continued support provided by the international community to the national armed forces and the security forces to build up their capabilities to address the multiple security challenges that the country faces. I encourage donors to continue that support so that the national armed forces and the security forces can

ensure their operational superiority in defence of Lebanon's sovereignty, security and stability. I note that both the Security Council and the International Support Group for Lebanon have been consistently unanimous in their support of the national armed forces.

45. The situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the limited resources available to UNRWA to assist them remains of concern, particularly in the light of the continued presence of Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic who have fled the violence there. I call upon donors to increase their support to UNRWA and its vital work in providing services to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. I note the work of the Palestinian joint security force in preventing an even graver escalation of conflict on several occasions in the Ein el-Hillweh camp and welcome the renewed commitment of Palestinian leaders to disassociate the Palestinian camps in Lebanon from the violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and the region more broadly.

46. I regret the absence of any progress on the delineation and demarcation of the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, which has a significant impact on border control. Integrated border management will, in the longer term, contribute significantly to better control of the borders of Lebanon and help to prevent the illegal transfer of weapons and fighters in both directions, which has become even more pressing in the context of events in the Syrian Arab Republic.

47. The continued violations committed by Israel in respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, including the overflights of Lebanese territory by Israeli military aircraft, are deplorable. I reiterate my call upon Israel to adhere to its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and to withdraw its forces from the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, as well as to cease its overflights of Lebanese airspace, which undermine the credibility of the Lebanese security services and generate anxiety among the civilian population. Incidents along the Blue Line, as detailed in previous reports on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), underscore the importance of ensuring that the situation along the entirety of the Blue Line remains stable, including in the Shab'a Farms area. I welcome the resumption of calm and the recommitment by both Lebanon and Israel to the cessation of hostilities and call upon all sides to avoid any provocative rhetoric. Full implementation of all provisions of relevant resolutions remains the best prevention against the risk of miscalculation or tensions.

48. Recent security developments, especially in the eastern border region, have put even greater pressure on the refugees, the host communities that receive them and the country, necessitating further support from the international community. Syrian refugees must continue to be protected against forcible return. I commend the Lebanese authorities for working closely with the United Nations in their efforts to support the Government in assisting and protecting refugees in accordance with human rights and humanitarian principles. The Syrian crisis constitutes not only a major humanitarian and socioeconomic challenge for Lebanon but a challenge to the country's stability and must be addressed as such. I strongly encourage Member States, including regional donors, to fulfil their burden-sharing responsibilities by contributing generously through the crisis response plan and the other mechanisms addressed at the Kuwait donor conference held on 31 March 2015.

49. It is important to maintain Lebanon's security, stability and unity in the context of a fragile domestic and regional climate. I remain firmly committed to the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004). I therefore count on the continued commitment of the Government to its international obligations and call upon all parties and actors to fully abide by resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). I also call upon Member States to renew efforts to support Lebanon in ensuring respect for its obligations under those resolutions as the best way to advance the country's long-term prosperity and stability as a democratic State. I will continue my efforts towards the full implementation of those and all other resolutions pertaining to Lebanon.